

English 335 – Modern American Fiction (1913 - 1940)  
Hendrix College, Spring 2022

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Gertrude Stein always speaks of America as being now the oldest country in the world because by the methods of civil war and the commercial conceptions that followed it America created the twentieth century, and since all the other countries are now either living, or commencing to be living a twentieth century life, America having begun the creation of the twentieth century in the sixties of the nineteenth century is now the oldest country in the world.

—Gertrude Stein



Joris Ivens, *Études de mouvements à Paris* (1927)

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1	Wed, 19 Jan	<u>Course Introduction</u> ➤ Watch Joris Ivens, <a href="#">Études de mouvements à Paris</a> (1927) (4 ½ minutes). Make a list of what the film tells us about its cultural moment; make a list of its aesthetic qualities ➤ Read Hemingway, <i>In Our Time</i> , “On the Quai at Smyrna”
2	Fri, 21 Jan	<i>In Our Time</i> , “Chapter I” through “Chapter VI” [A]
3	Mon, 24 Jan	<i>In Our Time</i> , “A Very Short Story” through “Chapter XII” [B&C]
4	Wed, 26 Jan	<i>In Our Time</i> , “Cross-Country Snow” through “L’Envoi” (end) [D]
5	Fri, 28 Jan	➤ Group A, Article Discussion #1 ➤ Introduce Toomer
6	Mon, 31 Jan	<i>Cane</i> , “Karintha” through “Blood-Burning Moon” [B]
7	Wed, 2 Feb	<i>Cane</i> , “Seventh Street” through “Bona and Paul” [C&D]
9	Fri, 4 Feb	Snow/Ice Day
9	Mon, 7 Feb	<i>Cane</i> , “Kabnis” [A]
10	Wed, 9 Feb	➤ Group B, Article Discussion #2 ➤ Introduce Larsen
11	Fri, 11 Feb	<i>Quicksand</i> , Chapters 1-12 [C]
12	Mon, 14 Feb	<i>Quicksand</i> , Chapters 13-end [D]
13	Wed, 16 Feb	<i>Passing</i> , Part I through Part II Chpt One [A]
14	Fri, 18 Feb	<i>Passing</i> , Part II Chpt Two through end [B]
	Mon, 21 Feb	No class. Start <i>Manhattan Transfer</i> !
15	Wed, 23 Feb	➤ Group C, Article Discussion #3 ➤ Introduce Dos Passos
16	Fri, 25 Feb	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> , 1st Section thru “IV. Tracks” [D]
17	Mon, 28 Feb	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> Section, “V. Steamroller” thru 2nd Section, “IV. Fire Engine” [A]
18	Wed, 2 Mar	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> Section, “V. Went to the Animals’ Fair” thru 3rd Section, “II. Nickelodeon” [B]
19	Fri, 4 Mar	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Section, “III. Revolving Doors” to end [C]
20	Mon, 7 Mar	➤ Group D, Article Discussion #4 ➤ Introduce West
21	Wed, 9 Mar	writing/optional conference day
22	Fri, 11 Mar	writing/optional conference day
23	Mon, 14 Mar	<i>The Day of the Locust</i> chapters 1-15 [E&F]
24	Wed, 16 Mar	<i>The Day of the Locust</i> chapter 16 to end [G&H]
25	Fri, 18 Mar	Essay #1 Due @ noon via Teams
	21 - 25 Mar	SPRING BREAK

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26	Mon, 28 Mar	➤ Group <b>E</b> , Article Discussion #5 ➤ Introduce Loos
27	Wed, 30 Mar	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> , through April 30 <sup>th</sup> (stop at May 1 <sup>st</sup> ) [ <b>F&amp;G</b> ]
28	Fri, 1 Apr	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> , to end (of novella, not book) [ <b>H&amp;E</b> ]
29	Mon, 4 Apr	➤ Group <b>F</b> , Article Discussion #6 ➤ Introduce Faulkner
30	Wed, 6 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 1-3 [ <b>G</b> ]
31	Fri, 8 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 4-5 [ <b>H</b> ]
32	Mon, 11 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 6-7 [ <b>E</b> ]
33	Wed, 13 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 8-9 [ <b>F</b> ]
34	Fri, 15 Apr	➤ Group <b>G</b> , Article Discussion #7 ➤ Introduce Wright
35	Mon, 18 Apr	<i>The Man Who Lived Underground</i> , Part I [ <b>H</b> ]
36	Wed, 20 Apr	<i>The Man Who Lived Underground</i> , Part II [ <b>E&amp;F</b> ]
37	Fri, 22 Apr	<i>The Man Who Lived Underground</i> , Part III “Memories of My Grandmother” [ <b>G</b> ]
38	Mon, 25 Apr	Group <b>H</b> , Article Discussion #8
39	Wed, 27 Apr	writing/optional conference day
40	Fri, 29 Apr	writing/optional conference day
	Mon, 2 May	Reading Day
	Fri, 6 May 8:30-11:30	➤ Essay # 2 due by 0830 via Teams ➤ “Optional” Style Revision due by 1130 via Teams (see below).

- Team A:** Ben Cogdill, Andrew Brannon, Tyler Jones  
**Team B:** Anna Lawrence, Spencer Thompson, Kaleigh Coker  
**Team C:** Hannah Samuel, Verity Miller, Alysse Robinson, Lilly Brown  
**Team D:** Jay Vicente, John Callahan, Logan Ingram
- Team E:** Ben Cogdill, Andrew Brannon, Tyler Jones  
**Team F:** Anna Lawrence, Spencer Thompson, Kaleigh Coker  
**Team G:** Hannah Samuel, Verity Miller, Alysse Robinson, Lilly Brown  
**Team H:** Jay Vicente, John Callahan, Logan Ingram

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Course Description

This course introduces the history and variety of American fiction from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and helps place it in its cultural context. Given the extent and richness of the subject, the course will be suggestive rather than inclusive or even representative. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been dubbed the modernist period in literary and cultural studies, and one aspect of this course will be an exploration of what exactly the term *modernism* might signify. It aims to:

- (1) increase your understanding of this period of literary history;
- (2) foster your interpretation of literary texts, especially from the modernist era, through reflection, discussion, working with secondary sources, and writing; and
- (3) substantively engage with the course material.

In order to gain as much from this course as possible, you must actively engage the content. So while short lectures by the professor will certainly occur, student interaction—with the stories, with classmates, with the instructor, with your own imaginations and critical eye—will constitute the primary course activity.

**Primary Texts**

Hybrid Novels in Their Time:

- Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (1925)
- Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1923)

New York, New York:

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928) & *Passing* (1929)
- John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer* (1925)

Performing Selves:

- Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust* (1939)
- Anita Loos, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1925)

Southern Voices:

- William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936)
- Richard Wright, *The Man Who Lived Underground* (2021)

As a Literary Studies learning domain course, ENGL 335 has the following learning goals:

- 1) To engage in the practice of written and oral expression.
- 2) To read a text critically to determine what meanings it holds, how and why those meanings are produced, and the effects of these choices.
- 3) To examine how literary works provide insight into the human experience.

## Requirements/Assessment

Class Participation (10 pts): To receive all 10 points, you must have a near-perfect attendance record (no more than two absences); come to class prepared; proactively contribute to every class meeting by offering ideas and/or asking questions, respectfully incorporating the ideas of others; exercise good faith in other class activities and expectations.

Discussion Prompts (20 pts): Once per author, you are required to submit a Discussion Prompt for that day's reading. Your due date corresponds to your Article Discussion Team as indicated on the syllabus—this is an individual assignment (using the discussion group is just a scheduling tool). Each is worth 2 points. You can submit one additional Discussion Prompt per author (on a different day), up to four. Thus doing the assigned one-per-author gets you 16/20 points (80%), with the possibility of 4 points extra credit. If you miss your assigned date, you can only submit one total for that author.

Each Prompt must have: 2 genuine and substantive discussion questions; 2 interpretive insights or hypothesis; 1 passage (less than a page) identified for close reading. *Get beyond plot*. Because of different book editions, be very clear in identifying the passage. Post it in the appropriate Teams folder no later than two hours before class starts.

Article Discussion (10 pts each): In small groups, you will choose two critical articles about the most recent text for the entire class to study and discuss. Your group will lead the class activities on that day. You are welcome to assign a short task for the class members to prepare and bring. Note that you have the content of the article and its methodology and its form as your material. Distribute the articles to the class 24 hours beforehand; I recommend sending them to me early for advice. You will do this twice—once before Spring Break, once after break. Groups will be reassigned for the second round.

Analytical Essays (20 pts each): Make a significant interpretation of a text. You are limited only by the range of your critical imagination and your ability to present your case. Whatever else your essay does, it must address how your text reflects modernity/modernism. Feel free to use secondary material from outside this class. I recommended a pre-writing consultation with me. Use at least two secondary sources in significant fashion; only one of these can come from our Article Discussions. 8-10 pages; MLA. Essay # 1 will lose 1 point for every day it is late, beginning one minute after the due date/time. Essay #2 will not be accepted after the due date/time. Essays will receive letter grades that will be converted into the appropriate number of points. Prompts will be distributed during class.

“Optional” Draft Conferences (3 pts each): For each essay, schedule and conduct a one-on-one conference with the instructor over a **full** draft. The full draft must be submitted the day before the conference; the conference must occur no later than 24 hours before the essay's due date/time. “Optional” is in quotation marks because you are not required to hold a conference and earn these points.

“Optional” Style Revisions (2 pts each): For Essay #1, resubmit the essay a week after it is returned with style revisions made according to instructions accompanying the returned essay. For Essay #2, having submitted the final essay at the beginning of the final exam period, resubmit the essay at the end of the final exam period with style revisions made according to instructions given at the beginning of the exam period (a remote task).

## **Other Policies**

Hendrix College values a **diverse learning environment** as outlined in the College's Statement on Diversity. All members of this community are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the community. If you believe you have been the subject of discrimination please contact the Dean of Students Office (Mike Leblanc, leblanc@hendrix.edu 501-450-1222 or the Title IX Coordinator (Allison Vetter titleix@hendrix.edu, 501-505-2901). If you have ideas for improving the inclusivity of the classroom experience please feel free to contact this professor. See the Hendrix non-discrimination policies and the Department of English's statement on purpose and diversity.

**Electronic devices:** E-readers for course material are discouraged but permitted, except for cell phones. A few cautions: (1) Do not use e-readers for convenience at the expense of active reading. You are still expected to take notes, highlight passages, add comments, etc. (2) Laptops/tablets can be used in class as e-readers. Do not abuse this privilege. Keep in mind: You owe yourselves time away from a screen, and nothing is better for active reading than underlining and annotating paper copies, and taking notes by hand.

The **syllabus** is subject to revision as the course progresses.

**Disabilities:** It is the policy of Hendrix College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Students should contact Julie Brown in the Office of Academic Success (505.2954; brownj@hendrix.edu) to begin the accommodation process. Any student seeking accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor as soon as possible.

Your **Well-Being:** Hendrix recognizes that many students face mental and/or physical health challenges. If your health status will impact attendance or assignments, please communicate with me as soon as possible. If you would like to implement academic accommodations, contact Julie Brown in the office of Academic Success (brownj@hendrix.edu). To maintain optimal health, utilize campus resources like Hendrix Medical Clinic or Counseling Services (501.450.1448). Your health and well-being are important. Eat well, get sleep, and exercise!

**Email** will be used to contact the entire class for communicating changes to the syllabus and other matters. Check your Hendrix account daily.

**Academic Integrity:** Hendrix College is committed to high standards of honesty and fairness in academic pursuits. Such standards are central to the process of intellectual inquiry, the development of character, and the preservation of the integrity of the community. Please familiarize yourself with the statement of Academic Integrity. Frequently, errors in documentation and attribution are not deliberate attempts to pass another's ideas and words off as one's own, but rather misunderstandings of how to give that other person sufficient credit. Please consult with me on any potential confusion so we can avoid problems.